

SUCCESS POSES PROBLEMS FOR WYCOMBE'S LEE

● You would expect Wycombe Wanderers' manager, Brian Lee to be one of the most worry-free bosses in football after leading his side to a second successive Rothmans Isthmian League title last season — albeit by 0.1 of a goal.

But Lee, 39, who has guided Wycombe to Isthmian success four times in the last five seasons says: They say that success breeds success but it doesn't. It breeds problems.

"I'm the hero of Wycombe at the moment but I'm about to become the villain of the piece because the fans have seen it all now. The problem now is giving them something new.

"Winning something is very exciting. But hanging on to it is hard work. It's been difficult this season because everyone has been out to knock us down — next year it could be impossible."

Wycombe came with an incredible run that saw them unbeaten in almost five months to steal the title from Enfield in the very last match of the season with a 1-0 win over third placed Dagenham. And it was an 85th minute goal by Keith Searle that did it.

HONEST

The last side to beat Wycombe, who lost only three of their 42 League games and also won the Buck's Senior Cup, were First Division Middlesbrough.

They won 1-0 with a late goal at Ayresome Park in a third round FA Cup replay on January 7.

Says Lee: "That's the most satisfying thing to me, the fact that we have come all that way without losing. The Middlesbrough game was a great boost for us, recharging our batteries at just the right time."

Lee, who spent eight years as a deputy director at Lilleshall and a spell as manager of Southern League Wellington before joining Wycombe six years ago, has a simple explanation for his remark-



Boro's Boam chases Wycombe's Searle in their Cup clash.

able success at Loakes Park.

"We're honest. We play the game skilfully and fairly and that's what it is all about. I know I'm a bit of a lone fighter on this, but I won't have anyone at my club who doesn't believe in doing things the right way.

"There are plenty of players I know who would love to join Wycombe but I won't have them because they've got a nasty streak. I won't tolerate cheats."

Wycombe's disciplinary record speaks for itself. Only two players have been booked in the past two seasons, in which the club have played over 150 games.

Mind you, the path of righteousness hasn't been exactly unprofitable. As well as picking up the £1,000 cheque for winning the title, they've also taken the biggest chunk out of the sportsmanship pool for the past two seasons.

Their fair play reward this season will be worth around £400, about the same as last year, and they'll also collect £360 for winning nine matches by three goals or more.

PERKS

There are other perks, too. The players went on holiday to Cyprus last year to celebrate their success and this summer they're off to Yugoslavia for eight days, where they'll also play two matches against Second Division sides.

"It's very satisfying," says Lee, "especially as we did it with a relatively small squad of 16 players. You can't afford many injuries with

a pool of that size and we once had to put centre-half Micky Bullock in goal when both our keepers were hurt.

INSPIRING

"It was a tremendous team performance but our first team goalkeeper John Maskell deserves a word of special praise for a fine season. Alan Phillips was a great captain, very inspiring and Tony Horsman was the League's top scorer again with 34 goals."

Play-offs needed insists Hardy

● Enfield manager Ted Hardy, whose side were pipped in that incredible finish to the Rothmans Isthmian League, thinks there should be a play-off if two sides finish level on points.

Hardy, who only took over Enfield for the last three months of the season, said: "It's ridiculous. Wycombe beat us by one tenth of a goal when technically there's no such thing."

"I know people will say that I wouldn't complain if it had been the other way round, but I don't think the League should be settled like this after a long, hard season."

All the Enfield first team squad were at Wycombe to see the title slip from their grasp in the agonising final game.

But Hardy, who took over the North London club when Tommy Lawrence resigned because of business pressures earlier in the season, is hoping to go one better next year.

ROY COLLINS' NON-LEAGUE SCENE